

Dear Families and Friends of the 2d Battalion, 8th Marines Army Advisor Team and Police Advisor Team,

This is an in-country update from “America’s Army and Police Advisor Teams”. 2/8 is currently in the process of building a physical and psychological barrier between the people of Marjah and the Taliban. Vital to accomplishing this mission is our partnership with the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) comprised of the Afghan National Army units, Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP), and Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP). History proves that counter-insurgency campaigns are most successful when the fusion between military and law enforcement organizations is greatest. 2/8 understands the full potential of incorporating our Afghan partners in all that we do. This includes utilizing their unique military and law enforcement skills and their intimate understanding of the Afghan culture.

In partnering we have created an ANSF cell within the battalion’s headquarters that synchronizes Afghan employment across the battalion’s battlespace. In addition to this effort, we advise and mentor the ANSF unit’s headquarters in training, manning, and equipping their forces so they develop to a point where they are capable of maintaining an acceptable level of security without coalition force assistance. Each Afghan Army company has an advisor team in direct support to facilitate development at the company level and to advise the company commander on effective employment his unit. One of our advisor teams is dedicated to all police development across the battalion’s battlespace.

The most notable success to date is the creation of a fully-partnered, round-the-clock, combat operations center jointly operated by 2/8, the ANA, and the ANCOP. This not only creates a shared sense of responsibility for all security matters in our area, but provides a common location for staffs from all three forces to plan missions, logistics, or just develop rapport with each other.

The Afghan army and police in the area have met all our expectations. Before arriving, we were told that the individual Afghan, brave enough to serve his country in uniform, would perform magnificently under difficult situations. This is proven daily. Their physical and mental toughness is evident by the way they endure long missions, demonstrate tactical patience, and

alertly stand security posts. Their biggest challenges are caused by personnel and equipment shortages.

The AUP men in our area are a combination of locally trained police and police trained at the American and British-run police academy. We were surprised to discover that, at the individual level, their tactical skills did not differ. I will point out that those police who had been academy trained do have a better understanding of the Afghan constitution and the role of a police officer as a protector of the community. Regardless of their sourcing (local or academy), the police are still developing their skills as a crime investigating unit.

Semper Fi,

Maj V, USMC